

the payments currently in effect, these comparability payments will increase the General Schedule payroll by about 0.5 percent. When combined with the 2.5 percent across-the-board increase, the 3.0 percent total increase equals the 12-month increase in overall nationwide labor costs as of September 2006 (the reference period for decisions about the January 2008 pay adjustment under current law). Our national situation precludes granting larger locality pay increases at this time.

Finally, the law requires that I include in this report an assessment of the impact of my decision on the Government's ability to recruit and retain well-qualified employees. I do not believe this decision will materially affect our ability to continue to attract and retain a quality Federal workforce. To the contrary, since any pay raise above the amount proposed in this alternative plan would likely be unfunded, agencies would have to absorb the additional cost and could have to freeze hiring to pay the higher rates. Moreover, the GS "quit" rate continues to be very low (2.1 percent on an annual basis), well below the overall average "quit" rate in private enterprise. Should the need arise, the Government has many compensation flexibilities, such as special salary rates and recruitment and retention incentives, to maintain the high quality workforce that serves our Nation.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 28.

**Remarks Following Meetings With
Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of
Israel and President Mahmoud
Abbas of the Palestinian Authority**
November 28, 2007

Mr. Prime Minister, thank you; Mr. President—a series of successful meetings today with these leaders. Yesterday was an important day, and it was a hopeful beginning. No matter how important yesterday was, it's not nearly as important as tomorrow and the days beyond.

I appreciate the commitment of these leaders to working hard to achieve peace. I wouldn't be standing here if I didn't believe that peace was possible, and they wouldn't be here either if they didn't think peace was possible.

It's very important for the international community to support these two leaders during the bilateral negotiations that will take place. And one thing I've assured both gentlemen is that the United States will be actively engaged in the process; that we will use our power to help you as you come up with the necessary decisions to lay out a Palestinian state that will live side by side in peace with Israel.

And so I wish you all the best. I appreciate your courage and leadership. It's an honor to call you friends. And it's an honor to have watched you yesterday as you laid out your respective visions for something we all want, which is peace in the Holy Land.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:04 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

**Statement on the Resignation of
Allan B. Hubbard and the
Appointment of Keith Hennessey as
Director of the National Economic
Council**

November 28, 2007

As the Director of the National Economic Council, Al Hubbard has led the economic policymaking process in my administration for some of the most challenging economic issues confronting our Nation. His work has resulted in creative, sensible policies that have helped Americans continue to compete and prosper and live better lives. In leading the policy process on issues such as taxes, entitlements, health care, energy security, the environment, and trade and investment, Al contributed his own ideas and also worked to ensure that all views were brought to the table and given fair analysis and debate. While many of the policies Al worked to develop are in place today, other policy initiatives, including Social Security reform and health care reform, have laid the foundation

for policies I believe will be adopted in the future.

Al came to the White House after spending nearly 30 years as a successful entrepreneur and business leader. He brought to the White House his capacity for hard work and creative thinking and fostered an open, cooperative working environment.

Al has been a valuable leader among my economic advisers for nearly 3 years, and for many more years, he and his family have been friends to Laura and me. Al's presence in the White House will be deeply missed. Laura and I wish Al, his wife, Kathy, and his children, Will, Sara, and Katie, all the best as they move on to the next chapter in their lives.

I am pleased to announce that Keith Hennessey will succeed Al as Assistant to the President for Economic Policy and Director of the National Economic Council. Keith has been an important member of my White House team for more than 5 years. He has served as the deputy to three Directors of the National Economic Council and has worked on a broad range of economic policy issues. Prior to coming to the White House, Keith worked for Senator Trent Lott and at the Senate Budget Committee. Keith will make an outstanding Director of the NEC, and I look forward to continuing to work with him.

Statement on the Energy Information Administration's Report *November 28, 2007*

I was pleased to receive the Energy Information Administration's final report today, which includes U.S. greenhouse gas emissions for 2006. The final report shows that emissions declined 1.5 percent from the 2005 level, while our economy grew 2.9 percent. That means greenhouse gas intensity—how much we emit per unit of economic activity—decreased by 4.2 percent, the largest annual improvement since 1985. This puts us well ahead of the goal I set in 2002 to reduce greenhouse gas intensity by 18 percent by 2012.

My administration's climate change policy is science-based, encourages research break-

throughs that lead to technology development, encourages global participation, and pursues actions that will help ensure continued economic growth and prosperity for our citizens and for people throughout the world. Since 2001, we have spent almost \$37 billion on climate science, technology development, and incentives and international assistance.

Recently, we convened representatives of the world's major economies—the largest users of energy and largest producers of greenhouse gas emissions from both developed and developing nations—to discuss a new international approach on energy security and climate change. Our aim is to agree on a detailed contribution for a new global framework in 2008 that would contribute to a global agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change by 2009. The United States looks forward to working with partners to reach consensus on a “Bali roadmap” at the upcoming U.N. meeting on climate change in Indonesia in December.

Energy security and climate change are two of the important challenges of our time. The United States takes these challenges seriously, and we are effectively confronting climate change through regulations, public-private partnerships, incentives, and strong investment in new technologies. Our guiding principle is clear: We must lead the world to produce fewer greenhouse gas emissions, and we must do it in a way that does not undermine economic growth or prevent nations from delivering greater prosperity for their people.

Executive Order 13452— Establishing an Emergency Board To Investigate Disputes Between the National Railroad Passenger Corporation and Certain of Its Employees Represented by Certain Labor Organizations *November 28, 2007*

Disputes exist between National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) and certain of its employees represented by certain labor organizations. The labor organizations involved in these disputes are designated on